FACT SHEET

Project Name: Bellingham Bay Comprehensive Strategy

Proposed Action and Alternatives: The purpose of the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot is to expedite the cleanup of contaminated marine sediments through comprehensive planning and action. The EIS is both a programmatic EIS that evaluates impacts from implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy and an action-specific EIS. For specific cleanup action proposals for which sufficient information is available at this time, the EIS includes a project-specific evaluation of impacts associated with these specific cleanup alternatives (referred to herein as the Integrated Near-Term Remedial Action Alternatives). Evaluation of specific cleanup action proposals for which sufficient information does not currently exist will occur in future supplemental environmental documents. The alternatives evaluated in this EIS are:

Alternative 1, No Action, No Comprehensive Strategy

Alternative 2, Comprehensive Strategy: Implement a long-term planning context to inform future actions regarding sediment cleanup sites and source control, sediment disposal siting, habitat, and land use in Bellingham Bay, including specific cleanup alternatives:

Alternative 2A, Removal and Capping to Achieve Authorized Channel Depths (Confined Aquatic Disposal): Alternative 2A would achieve sediment quality standards (SQS) criteria at priority sediment cleanup sites within Bellingham Bay. This alternative would maintain existing navigation channels, and minimize dredging (420,000 cubic yards) and disposal of contaminated sediment. Subtidal aquatic habitat would be converted to intertidal aquatic habitat by the use of caps and confined aquatic disposal (CAD). The emphasis of this alternative is minimal disturbance in the near-term, potentially precluding future options to achieve deeper than currently authorized navigation depths.

Alternative 2B, Removal and Capping to Achieve Authorized **Channel Depths (Upland Disposal):** As in Alternative 2A, Alternative 2B would achieve SQS criteria at priority sediment cleanup sites within Bellingham Bay. This alternative would maintain existing navigation channels and minimize dredging (420,000 cubic yards) and disposal of contaminated sediment. However, unlike Alternative 2A, dredged materials would be disposed of at one or more off-site upland landfills. The emphasis of this alternative is the same as Alternative 2A.

Alternative 2C, Full Removal from Navigation Areas (Confined Aquatic Disposal): Alternative 2C would achieve SQS at priority sediment cleanup sites within Bellingham Bay. By removing more material that Alternatives 2A or 2B, this alternative would allow for future deepening of the existing navigation channels. Subtidal aquatic habitat would be converted to intertidal aquatic habitat by using caps

and CAD facilities. This includes dredging of 820,000 cubic yards. The emphasis of Alternative 2C is on removal of contaminated sediments to provide maximum flexibility to meet future navigational needs (deeper than currently authorized).

Alternative 2D, Full Removal from Navigation Areas and Partial Removal from the G-P ASB and Starr Rock Areas (Upland Disposal): Alternative 2D would achieve SQS criteria at priority sediment cleanup sites in Bellingham Bay. Like Alternative 2C, removing more material from the navigation channels allows flexibility for future deepening. However, unlike Alternative 2C, dredged materials would be disposed of at one or more off-site upland landfills. This alternative includes dredging of 1,100,000 cubic yards. The overall emphasis of Alternative 2D is on removal of contaminated sediments to provide maximum flexibility to meet future navigational needs (deeper than currently authorized); and removal of areas with elevated mercury concentrations from state-owned aquatic lands.

Alternative 2E, Full Removal from Public Lands (Upland Disposal): Alternative 2E would achieve SQS at priority sediment cleanup sites in Bellingham Bay by removing all contaminated sediment that is located on state-owned lands (2,400,000 cubic yards). This alternative calls for disposal of these materials at one or more off-site upland landfills. This alternative would also allow for maximum flexibility regarding the future deepening of the navigation channels and the use of state-owned harbor areas. The overall emphasis of Alternative 2E is the removal of contaminated materials from state-owned aquatic lands.

Preferred Remedial Action Alternative, Full Removal from Navigational Areas (Treatment/Confined Aquatic Disposal): The Preferred Remedial Action Alternative is similar to Alternative 2C and includes provisions for treatment. This alternative would allow for future deepening of the existing navigational channels through dredging of 820,000 cubic yards. At least 400,000 cubic yards of this would be treated, if a viable treatment technology is identified. Subtidal aquatic habitat would be converted to intertidal aquatic habitat by using caps and potentially a CAD facility. The overall emphasis of the Preferred Remedial Action Alternative is on removal of contaminated sediments to provide maximum flexibility for future navigational needs, while at the same time allowing flexibility in managing the dredged material.

Project Location: Bellingham Bay, Washington, within a line drawn from Point Francis to Governor's Point, including Portage Bay and Chuckanut Bay.

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Ecology

Pilot Team:

- Port of Bellingham
- City of Bellingham
- Whatcom County Health Department
- Lummi Nation
- Nooksack Tribe
- Georgia-Pacific West
- Washington Department of Ecology
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Responsible Official:

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Approvals Required:

For the specific cleanup action proposals evaluated in this EIS, some or all of the following permits and other approvals will be required:

- Model Toxics Control Act Cleanup Action Plan (Ecology)
- Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA – WDFW)
- Department of the Army Section 10/Section 404 Permit (Corps of Engineers)
- 401 Approval (Ecology)
- Aquatic Use Authorization (DNR)
- Coastal Zone Management Certification (Ecology)
- Shoreline Substantial Development (City of Bellingham)
- ESA Compliance (NMFS and USFWS)

Authors and Principal Contributors:

Anchor Environmental, L.L.C.

- Project Management
- EIS Preparation and Technical Editing
- Geology, Water, Sediment & Environmental Health
- Land Use, Shoreline Use, Recreation/Public Use
- Air and Noise
- Cultural Resources (based on report by LAAS 1999)

Pacific International Engineering, P.L.L.C.

- Fish and Wildlife
- Tribal and Commercial Fishing

Final EIS Issue Date:

October 10, 2000

Approximate Date of Final Action:

Ecology expects to release its draft Cleanup Action Plans (CAPs) for the Whatcom Waterway, Cornwall Avenue Landfill, and Harris Avenue Shipyard sites in 2001. The draft CAPs will be the subject of public notice and comment. Following review of public comments, Ecology will issue final CAPs. Thereafter, final design and permitting for the selected Near-Term Remedial Action Alternative will occur, with construction expected to begin in 2002. Expedited remedial action at the G-P Log Pond is scheduled to occur in Late 2000.

Type and Timing of Subsequent Review:

This is the SEPA review for the Comprehensive Strategy and remedial actions to implement the strategy in the near future – specifically the cleanup of the Whatcom Waterway Site, the Cornwall Avenue Landfill Site, and the Harris Avenue Shipyard Site. SEPA review of these actions is planned to be complete with issuance of the final EIS. However, more environmental work may occur after the final EIS. For example, disposal sites would be monitored after construction to ensure that they meet water quality standards. The environmental analyses contained in this document has been prepared to inform upcoming regulatory decision-making processes, including Ecology's cleanup decisions made pursuant to MTCA and Corps of Engineers permits.

Subsequent proposals in Bellingham Bay that implement the Comprehensive Strategy – for instance, source control projects, habitat restoration projects, or public shoreline access projects – may elect to use this EIS in some form to assist in their own SEPA review process.

It is expected that future supplemental environmental analyses will be prepared for any specific proposed cleanup actions other than those identified in this EIS as Near-Term Remedial Action Alternatives.

Location of Background Data and Documents Incorporated by Reference:

Washington Department of Ecology
Northwest Regional Office
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008
(425) 649-7272

Washington Department of Ecology
Bellingham Field Office
1204 Railroad Avenue
Suite 200
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 738-6250

Bellingham Public Library
210 Central Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 676-6860

Cost to the Public:

The initial printing is free of charge. If subsequent printings are necessary, then copies will be available for a nominal fee.